

Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
QAs – Film and Television COVID-19 Restrictions

Questions and Answers

Q. How will the regulatory changes you are making impact the film and television industry?

- The amended Stage 1 regulation will allow a commercial film and television production taking place in regions that remain in the Shutdown Zone to have 50 performers on set.
- The amended Stage 1, 2, and 3 regulations will now require that commercial film and television productions operate in accordance with the guidance document titled “Film and television industry health and safety during COVID-19” issued by the Film and Television Health and Safety Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

Q. What film and television production activities are allowed?

Commercial film and television production, including all supporting activities such as hair, makeup and wardrobe, is allowed in the Green, Yellow, Orange, Red, and Grey Zones if productions meet the following conditions:

- The set must be configured and operated in such a way as to enable persons on the set to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from other persons, except where necessary for the filming of the film or television production.
- No studio audiences may be permitted to be on the film or television set.
- Persons who provide hair or makeup services must wear appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must be separated from any other performers by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.
- The person responsible for a film and television production must ensure that the film or television production operates in accordance with the guidance document entitled “Film and television industry health and safety during COVID-19” issued by the Film and Television Health and Safety Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

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In the Shutdown Zone, productions must also meet the following condition in order to be allowed to open:

- No more than 50 performers may be permitted on set.

Q. What measures will be put in place to ensure the sector operates safely?

Film and television productions are required to ensure workplaces are safe; that workers and communities are protected; and that physical distancing is maintained as much as possible.

The film and television sector is making extensive use of COVID-19 testing for workers and the sector was selected by the Ministry of Health to receive rapid antigen tests to support screening on production sites.

The film and television sector was selected because of its robust health and safety practices and the infrastructure it has created to administer the tests.

Testing cadence ranges from every other day to weekly, depending on the role of individual worker. Many productions also require a negative pre-employment test result 48 hours prior to employment.

COVID-19 health and safety measures such as physical distancing, masking, and testing have been widely implemented.

Productions have created well defined tiered workplace zones to limit contact between workers.

Location management teams have also worked closely with regional and municipal film offices across the province to ensure well defined distinctions between public space and the workplace when working on location to ensure public safety.

Q. Why are you loosening restrictions for the film and television sector?

It is important to not only have very strict and comprehensive health and safety protocols in place for an industry to operate during lockdown, but to have evidence that an industry is able to meet those high standards.

The film and television industry is following rigorous health and safety protocols developed to ensure the safety of performers and staff.

The industry has demonstrated throughout the pandemic that it has the resources and capacity to follow necessary protocols to ensure the safety of performers and staff engaged in this type of activity.

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For example:

- The film and television sector is making extensive use of COVID-19 testing for workers.
- The film and television sector was selected because of its robust health and safety practices and the infrastructure it has created to administer the tests.
- Testing cadence ranges from every other day to weekly, depending on the role of individual worker.
- Many productions also require a negative pre-employment test result 48 hours prior to employment.

Q. Why are you increasing the 50-person limit for the film and television industry but not other similar industries?

The government is increasing the performer limit on film and television sets in the Shutdown Zone from a 10-person limit to 50 persons.

This decision was made after extensive review of health and safety protocols that have been adopted by the film and television industry, and the recognition that the industry has the required resources to ensure the health and safety of performers and staff.

The film and television industry is following rigorous health and safety protocols developed to ensure the safety of performers and staff.

They have demonstrated throughout the lockdown period that they have the resources and capacity to follow necessary protocols to ensure the safety of performers and staff engaged in this type of activity.

For example:

- The film and television sector is making extensive use of COVID-19 testing for workers and the sector was selected by the Ministry of Health to receive rapid antigen tests to support screening on production sites.
- The film and television sector was selected because of its robust health and safety practices and the infrastructure it has created to administer the tests.
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- Many productions also require a negative pre-employment test result 48 hours prior to employment.

Permitting flexibility in a safe and measured way will allow Ontario's film and television industry to maintain its competitive advantage, while supporting Ontario's creative economy.

Q: How is set defined in relation to the 50-person limit?

A: The film or television set, as it pertains to the restriction of 50 performers permitted in the Shutdown Zone, refers to the space where active performing and filming occurs. Performers who are not actively performing may be located in holding areas (e.g., trailers, hair and makeup areas, etc.) and would not be considered to count as part of the 50-performer limit. Any performers who are not actively performing must follow physical distancing and all other requirements.